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ABSTRACT

Graduate surveys are a good way for home study schools to determine whether graduates are getting jobs in their field of training and whether courses are meeting student expectations. Although telephone surveys are more costly and time-consuming than mail surveys, they are usually more accurate. Survey response rates can be boosted to 50-60% by making surveys brief, anonymous, and "official looking." Survey planners should take the following steps: decide whether to make the survey an in-house or outside operation; prepare a survey budget covering survey administration, analysis, and follow-up costs; delegate control of the survey to a responsible administrator with knowledge of surveys and in-house and vendor capabilities; select an attractive survey format; make cover letters courteous and brief; enclose a return envelope; make a list of question topics directly related to survey objectives, group the topics into logical categories, and determine whether individual questions will be open or closed ended; limit surveys to two sheets; balance the need to require identifying information and ensure respondent confidentiality; make surveys readable, arrange for pretests of surveys; and survey graduates' employers and colleges. (Four sample cover letters and six sample surveys are included.) (MN)

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NHSC OCCASIONAL PAPER

Conducting Graduate Surveys

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NHSC OCCASIONAL PAPER
NUMBER 5

by

Mary McKeown, Principal
American School, Chicago, Illinois

Credit for much of the material included in this paper belongs to Leonard Valore, Robert Godfrey and other members of the NHSC Graduate Survey Committee.

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NHSC OCCASIONAL PAPERS are essays intended to stimulate and encourage candid exchanges of ideas between home study professionals. For a complete set of *Occasional Papers*, write or call the NHSC.

Introduction

Today all institutions -- government, business, industry, education -- are being called upon to show accountability. In the last ten years we have seen report after report on what is wrong with education in America. The public expects improved performance at all levels. In response, state departments of education and accrediting agencies have developed criteria for "outcomes assessment."

The purpose of this paper is to help schools develop a means of measuring the outcomes of their programs. If the program has as its objective to train a student to be an electronic technician, motel manager, or travel agent, do the graduates get such jobs? How do the graduates feel about their training? Was it adequate? Where could it be improved?

Fortunately, we live in a society in which most people like to be asked their opinion. Your students and graduates should be willing to share their thoughts with you. Do graduates of schools offering academic degree or diploma programs feel that the courses they took met their needs? The same information is needed by schools that are primarily avocational. Were the students satisfied? How could the courses be improved?

The National Home Study Council has many different types of schools. Each type of school will need to develop its own survey instruments to measure its outcomes. However, there is one major question you need to answer as you set up your survey, "What do we need to know about our graduates?"

What We Need to Know

"What do we need to know about our graduates?" is a very broad question, however, it can be subdivided into narrower ones, such as:

- Do your graduates get jobs in their field of training?
- Do students feel their course expectations were met?
- Do students feel that instruction was effective?
- Did students meet most of their objectives by taking the course?

- Are students satisfied with the training program?
- For each course, how appropriate is:
  a. the level of difficulty?
  b. reading level?
  c. time for completion?
- Is the course meeting the school's objectives?
- Was the program accurately represented?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- How did the service provided by the school rate?

An excellent source for answers to these questions is the school's graduates.

The answers to these questions are important not only so that we have evidence for accrediting agencies or for government regulatory bodies, but because these responses can help us improve our schools and keep them up-to-date and growing. We need this feedback for curriculum planning, marketing, and management decisions.

The curriculum department may need to be upgraded to do a better job of preparing students for employment. Advertising may need to be changed to more realistically match the promised outcomes. On the other hand, the outcomes assessment may show that the school is indeed meeting its objectives and may give management clues on new student markets.

Organizing the Survey

First, let us look at how to organize the graduate survey. Your first decision is what delivery system are you going to use: mail or telephone survey.

If you use mail, how will the survey be sent? Will it go with the last lesson package or as a separate mailing? Suppose you decide to include it in the last lesson package. You will include the survey along with a cover letter and return envelope. You may get a greater response rate because the student is still studying and has not graduated. You will also save money on postage. On the other hand, you may not get the data you need since the student has not had a chance to complete the course and get a job.

If you send the survey in a separate first class mailing along with the cover letter explaining its purpose and a return stamped envelope, you will want to mail it at a fixed time after graduation -- say two to four weeks. Studies show that the longer you wait, the lower your response rate is likely to be.

Another method, although more costly and time-consuming, is to survey via the telephone. This method is usually more accurate than mailing surveys, but it may be difficult to contact students who work. Should a school decide to use the telephone for a survey, the school may want to hire an outside firm experienced in surveying by telephone.

The school may want to send out the original survey by mail at the end of the course and then follow up by telephone or send another mailing a month later. If a third mailing is desired, wait about three weeks.

An Acceptable Response Rate

A school will be fortunate to get a 30% response to a one-time survey. The NHSC's Accrediting Commission achieves a 50-60% response rate by employing these tactics: anonymity (no student needs to sign); short form (one sheet); yes/no questions; and it's an official looking "third party" survey (the NHSC in Washington is surveying a school's students).

In-House or Outside Operation

Your next decision is whether or not to make your graduate survey an in-house operation or an outside operation. If it is done in-house, it will probably be less costly. However, you will need someone on your staff who is knowledgeable about surveys to handle the project. If you decide to use the telephone, you may need more telephone facilities. You will want to use a microcomputer with appropriate software for recording and analyzing the data you acquire.

If you decide on an outside firm, you will spend more money, but you will not have to hire extra people or assign some of your present staff to the survey project. Another benefit is that an outside firm

might be more objective than the school in interpreting survey results.

There are positives and negatives for each tactic. Most NHSC schools usually do their own surveying -- quality can be assured and costs contained.

Next you will need to decide how many graduates you want to survey. Are you going to send the form to all graduates or to a random sample? If you have a large number of graduates each year, you might want to send your questionnaire to a random sample. Survey specialists indicate the minimum sampling number should never be fewer than 200. However, if your graduates number fewer than 200, you will want to survey the entire population.

Preparing a Budget

As with any project, you will need a budget. Your budget should provide for the following:

- **Printing of cover letter and survey.**
- **Postage or telephone cost.** The cost of postage will depend upon whether you send the surveys with the last lesson or separately. Telephone costs will depend upon the type of phone service you have and the distance from the school that the students live.
- **Encoding and analysis of responses.** Approximately how much time will be needed to encode and analyze the responses?
- **Follow-up survey.** Whether you do the survey in-house or outside, you will need to provide for the cost of a follow-up.

The estimated costs for a survey of 200 graduates with a 50% response rate is about $300-$400. The biggest cost is what happens when you ignore outcomes assessment. Can you afford not to survey in this age of accountability?

Establishing Control

You will want to assign the project to a responsible administrator -- one with a knowledge of surveys and one who knows in-house capabilities as well as vendor capabilities. Let the project director know where the survey rates in your scale of priorities for the assignments which he or she may have. If top school executives express interest in the survey, the project is more likely to achieve its goals.

Set up written procedures including a time schedule, cut-off dates, mailing dates and processing schedule. You may want to create a chart displaying the results of original mailing, follow-up and cut-off dates.

Survey Format

Your aim is to get the student to answer the questionnaire, so you want to make the survey package as attractive as possible. The easier it is to complete and the more professional and inviting it looks, the more likely a graduate will respond.

First decide upon the color and weight of the envelope and the paper to be used for the cover letter and the survey itself. It is best to use quality paper stock for all components of the survey package.

Next decide who will sign the letter. It is usually best to have it from someone whose name the student will recognize such as the school's president or educational director.

Writing a Cover Letter

Be sure to include a courteous, brief, carefully worded cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey. Emphasize that the survey is a very important document -- let them know they are helping you with a vital project. You can include valid purposes, such as the necessity of having data from graduates to satisfy requirements of accreditation agencies and government agencies, or to help you determine student satisfaction with the course, or to help assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program, etc.

Address the cover letter to the graduate personally rather than "Dear Graduate." You can assure students that their responses will be kept confidential. Tell them how you will use the results. End with a call for action -- "Take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey." If you think you might not get a good rate of return, you may want to offer an incentive to the student for answering, such as a pamphlet that pertains to what the student has studied or a subscription to the school newsletter for a year. Above all, give the graduate a good reason for helping you, such as that it will help future students, that it will ensure greater employer acceptance if the course is continually upgraded, etc.

Sample Cover Letter

January 11, 1999

Dear Mr. Jones:

The XYZ School feels that those best suited to judge its program are its graduates. Your answers to the attached survey will help us serve future students.

Please take a few minutes to answer the survey and return it in the postage paid envelope.

Sincerely,

Edward Smith

Mr. Edward Smith
Educational Director

Enclosing a Return Envelope

Enclosing a stamped return envelope is **a must**. Omitting it will cut down on the number of replies you can expect. Studies suggest that more people reply to surveys when an ordinary postage stamp is provided on the return envelope than when a metered one or a permit is used, but in any case, make sure it is postage paid.

Address the return envelope to the president or whoever signs the letter -- someone at the school that the student knows.

Preparing for a Telephone Survey

If you want to use a telephone survey, set up a branched (if yes, then ask X, etc.) flow-chart script to determine the questions that should be asked.

Preparing the Survey Form

You will want to make the form as pleasing and inviting to the eye as you can. The more successful surveys are typeset on white paper. It's a businesslike approach that communicates importance. Use enough white space to make the content easy to read. Select a style of type that adds to the attractiveness of the form.

Limit your survey to one or two pages, printed front to back. A long form will cause even the most eager graduate to lose interest. The longer and more complicated the survey looks, the lower the response rate. If it looks time-consuming, the graduate will likely not respond.

The following pages show a sample of a survey for a career school. There are also other samples at the end of this article.

Sample Survey of Graduates

Survey of XYZ School Graduates

Directions: Please place an X in front of the answer that best describes your response to each of the following questions. In some cases more than one response may apply to you. If so, please check all that apply.

Name _____
(optional)

Home Address _____
(optional)

1. My present age is:
   - ____ a. 18 or under
   - ____ b. between 18 and 25
   - ____ c. between 26 and 30
   - ____ d. between 31 and 35
   - ____ e. between 36 and 40
   - ____ f. between 41 and 45
   - ____ g. 46 or over

2. I am:
   - ____ a. male
   - ____ b. female

3. My present occupation is:
   _____

4. Has the course been beneficial to you in your work?
   - ____ a. Yes, I have received a promotion.
   - ____ b. Yes, I have been hired for a job related to my studies.
   - ____ c. No, I have not yet applied for a job in this area.
   - ____ d. I have been unable to find a job.
   - ____ e. No, I have decided not to enter this field.

5. Overall, how would you rate the course you have just completed?
   - ____ a. excellent
   - ____ b. good
   - ____ c. average
   - ____ d. not valuable

6. The XYZ School was recommended to me by:
   - ____ a. my employer
   - ____ b. friend or relative
   - ____ c. my high school guidance counselor
   - ____ d. my high school principal
   - ____ e. other _____

7. What were your expectations in taking the course?
   - ____ a. to get a job in the field now
   - ____ b. to get a better job or promotion
   - ____ c. to get a job at some later time
   - ____ d. for my own satisfaction
   - ____ e. other (please specify)
     _____

8. How well do you feel your expectations were met?
   - ____ a. very well
   - ____ b. well
   - ____ c. satisfactorily
   - ____ d. not as well as I expected (if you answered (d) what did you expect that the course did not cover?)
     _____
     _____
     _____
     _____

11

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9. Was the course accurately represented to you before you enrolled?
   ____ a. yes
   ____ b. no

10. Do you feel the course met the objectives stated in the school's literature?
   ____ a. yes
   ____ b. no

11. Would you recommend the course to a friend?
   ____ a. yes
   ____ b. no

12. Were the materials sent to you promptly so you had them when you needed them?
   ____ a. yes
   ____ b. no

13. Were your examinations returned promptly?
   ____ a. yes
   ____ b. no

14. Were the instructor's comments on your examinations helpful?
   ____ a. very helpful
   ____ b. helpful
   ____ c. sometimes helpful
   ____ d. not helpful

15. The study materials I received were:
   ____ a. excellent
   ____ b. good
   ____ c. satisfactory
   ____ d. unsatisfactory

16. The reading level was:
   ____ a. difficult
   ____ b. easy
   ____ c. appropriate

17. The course covered the material:
   ____ a. extremely well
   ____ b. well
   ____ c. adequately
   ____ d. not as well as I expected

18. The course material was:
   ____ a. up-to-date
   ____ b. needs to be brought up-to-date in certain areas

(If you answered (b) indicate areas you feel need to be updated).

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Additional comments: The XYZ School will greatly appreciate any comments you can make, based upon your experience as a student, that might help improve its instructional materials and/or service to present and future students.

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Please mail it in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

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Item Selection and Preparation

Here are the steps in the selection and preparation of survey items:

1. *Make a list of question topics which relate directly to survey objectives.*

   The first step in the selection and preparation of survey items is for the author to define precisely the information desired and then to begin to write as few items as possible to obtain it. One way to limit the number of items is by listing general topics which relate directly to the desired information. These topics will form the basis for item generation as well as specify the range of items to be considered.

2. *Group topics into logical categories.*

   The second step in the selection and preparation of survey items is for the author to group related topics into logical and coherent categories.

3. *Determine item format for each topic question.*

   The third and final step in the selection and preparation of survey items is for the author to consider the format of each item in terms of how it will impact (1) the respondent and (2) those who must analyze the completed survey.

There are two types of items that are used for surveys: open-ended and closed-ended. Open-ended items require the respondent to answer in his/her own words. It is a type of item in which no response structure is provided.

The advantages of open-ended questions include:

- respondents have more freedom to answer in any way they please
- respondents can provide more detail if they desire to do so
- items elicit responses considered by the respondent to be essential

- bias of the surveying institution is minimized

The disadvantages of open-ended questions include:

- difficulty in tallying and analyzing
- respondents may have difficulty in responding to the item due to the unlimited number of possible responses

The format for open-ended items may include essay, limited essay, and short answer.

Closed-ended items limit the respondent to a set number of specific responses.

The advantages of closed-ended questions include:

- uniformity and ease of answering
- known range of possible responses that are mutually exclusive
- allow essential pre-coding to perform data analysis

Disadvantages of a closed-ended item include:

- forces respondents to select an alternative they may not have otherwise chosen
- inability of respondents to select an alternative response not given
- can channel respondents to support a bias.

Types of Questions

There are generally four formats from which the author may select to generate/prepare a closed-ended item:

Dichotomous: The respondent is faced with two mutually exclusive responses. Examples include YES-NO; AGREE-DISAGREE; or RIGHT-WRONG. These items do not allow much leeway for assessing a degree of feeling in the respondent.

Multiple Choice: The respondent may select from three, four, or more possible responses. This format allows for precise answers.

Rating Scales: The respondent gives numerical rating to some kind of judgment. These can be vague and lead to less precise results.

Ranking: The respondent arranges items in order with regard to his/her own opinion or preference. These can be confusing and can lead to frustration and no response.

Dos and Don'ts

In selecting or preparing items, the author must consider four key areas: item content, wording, sequence, and response form.

Consider the following list of DOs and DON'Ts (adopted from the Drs. Rosenburg and Smitley) in selecting and preparing your items:

- DO:
  - Be sure directions are clear and concise. Then assume that some respondents will not read them.
  - Begin survey with non-threatening questions.
  - Ask questions of a general nature before those of a specific nature.
  - Ask one question at a time.
  - Word questions in simple, direct language; use simple sentences.
  - Emphasize crucial words with all caps, underscoring or italics.
  - Use same frame of reference throughout.
  - Provide sufficient space for open-ended questions.
  - Consider each question asked in light of timing and effects on answers.

- DON'T:
  - Use negatively worded questions.
  - Bias respondent's answers with slanted questions.
  - Ask questions you have answers for.
  - Ask questions if you already know the answers.
  - Place most important questions at the end of the survey.
  - Ask questions the graduate cannot answer.
  - Ask questions regarding moral or ethical judgments.

Requirements and Limitations

Here are some tips to help you determine administrative requirements and limitations:

- **Limit the survey to two sheets**

A rule of thumb for survey developers is to keep the survey instrument brief, to the point, and yet effective. In other words, the instrument must address and meet is its intended objectives and yield quantitative and qualitative data. Keep it to two pages if you can. You want to motivate and keep the interest of the intended target audience, but you want to ask only the pertinent or "must know" questions and refrain from asking "nice-to-know" questions as they only add to the size of the questionnaire. Remember that a survey that tries to accomplish too much at one time can confuse your students and can lead to meaningless or biased data or to no response at all.

- **Require identification**

Proper identification is necessary for documents' purposes, but ask the respondents only what is considered essential, critical information. Respondents need to be assured of confidentiality and the importance of providing the requested information. For example, do not ask the sex of the respondent or their social security number unless this information is absolutely vital, since questions such as these can be a sure-fired "turn-off."

- **Make the survey readable**

Keep the language simple. Analyze your audience and write on their level. Researchers have suggested that writing at the sixth grade level may be appropriate. Do a quick "fog index" reading level evaluation of your cover letter and survey. Avoid the use of technical terms unless their use is necessary to obtain the data you seek. Remember a corollary to Murphy's law is "If something can be misunderstood, it will be." Keep questions as short as possible.

- **Arrange for a pretest of the survey**

This is the most important step in preparing your survey. The purpose of the pretest is to see just how well your cover letter motivates your respondents and how clear your instructions, questions, and responses are. You should choose a group of people you feel are representative of the group you plan to survey. After explaining the purpose of the pretest, let them read and answer the questions without interruption. When they are through, ask them to critique the cover letter, instructions, and each of the questions and answers. Don't be satisfied with learning only what confused or alienated them. Question them to make sure that what they thought something meant was really what you wanted it to mean. Use the helpful hints mentioned above as a check list, and go through it with them to get their reactions on how well the questionnaire satisfies these points. Finally, redo any parts of the questionnaire that seem weak or unclear.

- **Survey employers**

In addition to surveying your graduates, you may find surveying their employers helpful in judging the outcomes of your courses. Those schools who work closely with industry will find this especially useful in knowing whether your graduates are well prepared for the jobs in your field and just what employers want. Employer surveys are an excellent way to prospect for new courses.

- **Survey colleges**

If your school offers academic courses, you may want to survey the colleges your graduates attend. You will have to have the permission of individual graduates before you attempt such a survey.

In the section that follows you will find sample cover letters and surveys.

Cover Letter to Survey Students Who Have Obtained Jobs

January 22, 1999

Dear John Doe:

The XYZ School periodically conducts studies of the performance of its graduates on-the-job. In conducting these studies, we ask employers to release information on the performance of students. The result of any individual student is kept strictly confidential. Only general statistics on the performance of our graduates are published.

If you would be willing to have the officials at your place of employment release such information, please sign the statement below.

Sincerely,

Edward Smith

Edward Smith
Educational Director

I hereby give my permission to the personnel department to release information on my job performance to the XYZ School for the purpose of studying the performance of XYZ School's graduates.

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Sample Cover Letter to Employer

January 22, 1999

Mr. John Anderson
Personnel Department
Acme Corporation
Bellevue, MD 78910

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The purpose of XYZ School is to provide well-trained people for your industry. I am writing to you because you have recently employed a graduate of our school.

Your answers to the enclosed questionnaire will help us improve our educational program so we can continue to be of service both to our graduates and their employers.

If your records indicate that you have XYZ School graduates other than those we have listed, please let us know.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Cordially,

Edward Smith

Edward Smith
Educational Director

19

Sample Survey to Employers

Survey of Graduate's Employer

Employee's Name _____

Address _____
(City) (State) (ZIP)

Our records show that the above named person was employed by your organization in _____ (year).

1. What is the title of his/her job? _____

2. How would you rate his/her performance?

   ____ a. Excellent
   ____ b. Good
   ____ c. Satisfactory
   ____ d. Unsatisfactory

3. Would you hire other graduates of this school?

   ____ a. yes
   ____ b. no

4. How would you rate his/her training as compared to other employees?

   ____ a. Excellent
   ____ b. Above Average
   ____ c. Average
   ____ d. Below Average

5. Additional Comments: _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Statement prepared by _____
Title _____
Address _____
(City) (State) (ZIP)

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Sample Survey for Academic School

Survey of XYZ School High School Graduates

Directions: Please place an X in front of the answer that best describes your response to each of the following questions. In some cases more than one response may apply to you. If so, please check all that apply.

Name _____ (optional) Address _____ (optional)

1. My present age is:
   ____ a. 16 or under
   ____ b. between 17 and 19
   ____ c. between 20 and 25
   ____ d. between 26 and 30
   ____ e. 31 or over

2. I am:
   ____ a. male
   ____ b. female

3. My present marital status is:
   ____ a. not married
   ____ b. married with no children
   ____ c. married with one child
   ____ d. married with two or more children

4. My purpose in completing my high school education was: (check all that apply)
   ____ a. to prepare for college
   ____ b. to get a job
   ____ c. to get a better job or a promotion
   ____ d. for my own satisfaction
   ____ e. other (please specify)
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. I enrolled in a home study course because:
   ____ a. I wanted to learn at my own pace
   ____ b. I wanted to save time by not having to commute to class
   ____ c. I did not want to return to high school because of my age
   ____ d. I had responsibilities which prevented me from attending class
   ____ e. I was traveling and could not attend resident school
   ____ f. other (please specify)
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. The XYZ School was recommended to me by:
   ____ a. friend or relative
   ____ b. my guidance counselor
   ____ c. my high school principal
   ____ d. other

7. If a friend asked me my opinion of the XYZ School, I would:
   ____ a. recommend it
   ____ b. not recommend it

21

8. The approximate number of units of high school credit I took with the XYZ School was:
____ a. 4 units
____ b. between 5 and 8 units
____ c. between 9 and 12 units
____ d. between 12 and 18 units

9. I graduated from the XYZ School's:
____ a. College Preparatory Course
____ b. Vocational/Cultural Course
____ c. Basic High School Course

10. Generally, I would rate the textbooks and study guides the XYZ School furnished for my course as:
____ a. excellent
____ b. good
____ c. satisfactory
____ d. poor

11. The personal comments and other help that I received from my XYZ School instructors were:
____ a. very valuable
____ b. valuable
____ c. of some value
____ d. of little value

12. The education I received from XYZ School met my educational objectives:
____ a. exceptionally well
____ b. well
____ c. partly
____ d. not at all

13. Because of my graduation from XYZ School, my self-confidence has:
____ a. improved greatly
____ b. improved
____ c. not improved

14. Graduation from high school has helped me (check all that apply)
____ a. to prepare for college
____ b. to get a job
____ c. to get a better job or a promotion
____ d. to improve myself in other ways
____ e. not as yet

15. If I had not enrolled with XYZ School, my chances of being a high school graduate would have been:
____ a. poor
____ b. fair
____ c. good

16. As a result of my studies with XYZ School, my annual income has:
____ a. increased greatly
____ b. increased
____ c. not increased as yet

17. I consider the amount I paid for my XYZ School course to be:
____ a. exceptionally low
____ b. reasonable
____ c. too high

18. If you have college plans, answer the following:
____ a. I am presently in college
____ b. I plan to go to college later
____ c. I have completed college

We greatly appreciate any comments you can make that might help improve our instructional materials and/or service to present and future students. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Please mail it in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

22

End of Course Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Art School

Student Number: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City State ZIP

Please answer the following questions. Your answers will help us evaluate our text materials and teaching methods. We would like you to give us your honest opinions.

1. Which part of your training has helped you the most?

2. Which part of your training did you enjoy the most?

3. Which part of your training, if any, did not help you as much as the others?

4. Do you have any suggestions for improving our training?

5. Have you sold any of your artwork or are you working in the art field? Yes____ No ____. If you checked YES, give us the details.

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6. Have you done artwork for which you received no pay, but gained other benefits? Yes____No ____. Tell us about these projects.

7. Has your art training helped you in other ways . . . added to your outlook on life, helped you on your job, given you greater appreciation, improved your understanding, etc.? Yes _____ No____. Please explain fully.

8. Do you feel your art training has been worth the effort involved in finishing the course? Yes ____No ____. Please explain your answer.

9. Additional comments. If you need more space, write your comments here, or use a separate sheet of paper.

10. Would you recommend this training to others? Yes ____ No ____.

11. If YES, may we use your recommendation for promotional purposes? Yes ____No ____.

(Courtesy of Art Instruction Schools)

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Sample Questionnaire of Student Progress

Let Us Know How We Are Doing

As your instructors and staff of the Art School we are constantly in the process of reviewing our methods of providing service to you, our student.

Please take a few minutes to fill out this form. Send it with your next lesson. Let us know how we are doing, and how we can help you in your studies. Thanks!

	Yes	No
The Text Materials:		
are easy to read	____	____
explain things clearly	____	____
have interesting drawings	____	____
The Assignments are:		
easy to do	____	____
returned quickly	____	____
helpful	____	____
My Instructors:		
are friendly and helpful	____	____
give good comments	____	____
are very knowledgeable about art	____	____

So far, I would rate this course as: (circle one)

excellent good fair poor

Other comments or questions I have about my art course: (Use the back of this form if necessary.)

Name: _____

Student Number: _____

(Courtesy of Art Instruction Schools)

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Sample Cover Letter

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL
1601 - 18TH STREET, N.W. • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009 • 202-234-5100

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ELIZABETH R. HATCHER
ACCREDITING PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Dear Student:

As a part of its voluntary school accreditation review process, the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council conducts a survey of home study students.

We understand that several months ago you enrolled in a course offered by the correspondence school listed on the back of this letter.

Won't you please take a few moments to fill out the survey printed on the back of this letter and return it to us, in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope, within the next few days? You need not sign the form or identify yourself if you do not wish to.

Your response to the survey will help our agency evaluate this school to see if it meets our high standards of academic quality. You will be helping future generations of students by responding today.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth R. Hatcher

Elizabeth R. Hatcher

ES
Enclosure

The nationally recognized accrediting agency for home study schools.

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Accrediting Commission Survey Form

_____
School Being Surveyed

1. Are you? Male ____ Female; ____ Single ____ Married; ____ Your Age ____

2. How many years of classroom schooling have you completed? (Circle highest)
   0-6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 or more

3. What correspondence course did you enroll in? _____

4. What were the reasons you enrolled in this course? _____

5. What is your current status with your correspondence course?
   - ____ Finished the course
   - ____ Still studying the course
   - ____ Dropped out of the course after starting. Why? _____
   - ____ Never started the course

6. Please check the appropriate space for the following:

Yes	No		
____	____	a.	School advertising and catalogs accurately described the course and services.
____	____	b.	I talked with a school sales representative.
____	____	c.	The representative described the course and school services accurately (answer *only* if you spoke with a representative in person or by phone).
____	____	d.	The course covers the subject area.
____	____	e.	Course materials were shipped promptly and received in good condition.
____	____	f.	Course materials were well written and designed.
____	____	g.	Instructors are helpful in answering questions.
____	____	h.	Examinations test what is presented in the course.
____	____	i.	Examinations were promptly graded and returned.
____	____	j.	The school makes an effort to keep me studying.
____	____	k.	Would you recommend the school to a friend?

7. ____ ____ Based upon your own experience, would you have any suggestions for the school? If yes, what would you suggest? _____

8. ____ ____ All things considered, are you satisfied with the course, the services, and the school?

Thank you. Please mail your survey to us in the enclosed envelope.

Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council - 1601 Eighteenth Street, N. W. - Washington, D. C. 20009

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For Further Reading

Carithers, P. (1973). *How to Conduct Low Cost Surveys*, Arlington, Virginia: National School of Public Relations Association.

Erdos, Paul (1970). *Professional Mail Surveys*, New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Rosenberg, M. J. & Smitley, W. D. S. (1983). *Designing Questionnaires That Work*, Presentation at the National Society for Performance and Instruction - Handout Materials - Dearborn, Michgian.

Stacey, S. E., (1976). *A Guide to Questionnaire Development*, Working Paper No. 33, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Sudman, S. & Bradburn, N. M. (1982). *Asking Questions*, San Francisco: CA, Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Other Occasional Papers Available

Number One--Student Services: Achilles Heel or Crown Jewel? by Michael P. Lambert, NHSC's Executive Director Designate

Number Two--What Manager Doesn't Study At Home? by Dr. Gordon Wills, Principal, The International Management Centres

Number Three--Toward Better Service and Testing by Dennis Foltz, Vice President of Education and Operations, Gemological Institute of America

Number Four--Testing Home Study Advertising by Jack Thompson, Consultant

To obtain copies, please call 202-234-5100 or write to:

National Home Study Council
1601 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

NHSC OCCASIONAL PAPER FIVE

NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL

1601 18TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009
(202) 234-5100